# TALES of the TOM-TOM

BY "WENDIGO"

from THE LAND of the SLEEPING GIANT

# INDIAN LEGENDS

"Legends are the dividing line, between fantasy and fact."

You will better understand the true meaning of these and other Indian legends in the knowledge that the early Redman solemnly believed that the prime punishment the Great Spirit could cast upon him, was to turn him into stone. Whenever he saw a stone or rock that resembled a human being, animal, fish or bird, it would mean to him that this was an evil spirit and must be avoided. To protect his relatives and friends from coming into contact with it he would create a fantastic and usually gruesome story about the object he had seen. As these stories were passed on from one generation to another, they became so real that they were finally accepted as an actual happening.

"Wendigo"

# THE SLEEPING GIANT

STANDING on the shores of the Twin Cities of Fort William and Port Arthur at the head of the great Lake Superior, one can perceive, on looking out across the waters of Thunder Bay, a great land formation situated directly in the mouth of the Bay.

It requires no imagination whatever to see that this form resembles the sleeping body of a giant, arms folded across his massive chest as in the majesty of death.

Mystery and legend surround the origin of this strange phenomenon of nature and down through the ages the following story seems to have survived.

On an island just outside Thunder Bay, now known as "Isle Royale", once lived a great tribe of Ojibway Indians.

Because of their loyalty to their Gods, and their peaceful and industrious mode of living, Nanna Bijou, the Spirit of the Deep Sea Water decided to reward them.

One day he called their Chief to his great Thunder Temple on the mountain, and warned him that if he told the secret to the White man that he, Nanna Bijou, would be turned to stone and the Ojibway tribe perish.

The Chief gave his promise, and Nanna Bijou told him of the rich silver mine, now known as "Silver Islet." The Great Spirit told him to go to the highest point on Thunder Cape, and here he would find the entrance to a tunnel that would lead him to the centre of the mine.

Apparently the Chief and his people found the mine, for the Ojibway became famous for their beautiful silver ornaments. So beautiful indeed were

they, that the Sioux Warriors on seeing them upon their wounded enemies, strove to wrest their secret from them.

However, torture and even death failed to make the gallant Ojibway divulge their secret and the Sioux chieftains had to devise another scheme to find the source of the Ojibway silver.

One day, they summoned their most cunning scout to a pow-wow and a plan was formed.

The scout was to enter the Ojibway camp disguised as one of them. This he did and in a few days succeeded in learning the secret of the island of silver.

Going to the mine at night he took several large pieces of the precious metal, in order to prove to his chieftain that he had fulfilled his mission.

The scout, however, never returned to his camp, for on his way back he stopped at a white traders post to purchase some food. Having no furs or money with which to pay for the goods, he used a piece of the silver.

Upon seeing such a large piece of the gleaming metal, two white men sought to obtain the whereabouts of its source, in order to make themselves fabulously rich. After filling the Sioux Scout with firewater they persuaded him to show them the way to the mine.

When almost in sight of "Silver Islet" a terrific storm broke over the Cape. The white men were drowned and the Indian was found in a crazed condition floating aimlessly in his canoe, but the most extraordinary thing that had happened during the storm, was that where once was a wide opening to the bay, now lay what appeared to be a great sleeping figure of a man. The Great Spirit's warning had been fulfilled and he had been turned to stone.

On a little island at the foot of the Sleeping Giant, can still be seen the partly submerged shafts of what was once the richest silver mine in the Northwest. White men have tried again and again to pump out the water that keeps flooding it from Lake Superior but without success. Is it still under the curse of Nanna Bijou, Spirit of the Deep Sea Water . . . perhaps . . . who can tell?

# THE PEEPING SQUAW

MANY points of interest can be viewed from the decks of pleasure craft, plying the waters of Thunder Bay. Among the most interesting is the natural spectacle nicknamed "The Peeping Squaw."

Cruising towards the Sleeping Giant and looking westward an oddity presents itself as the boat passes Pie Island. For a short distance only, one can see, what appears to be a woman peeping out behind the plateau that gives the Island its name. As the boat passes on the figure appears to vanish, almost as if she had gone into hiding again.

A quaint legend explains the origin of this unusual optical illusion.

Greatly resenting the influx of the white men upon the territories of his people, Nanna Bijou, Indian Spirit of the Deep Sea Water sought to frighten them away. Taking his giant Thunder Bird with him he swept up and down the shores of the Great Lake causing havoc with his terrible thunder storms wherever the white man's camps appeared.

As the number of these camps grew, Nanna Bijou spent more and more time away from his temple on the Mountain, and soon his good wife became tired of not having her husband with her.

To pass the many long days away, she would take her bow and arrows and hunt, for she was known to be a great huntress.

While his wife was away on one of these hunting trips, Nanna Bijou returned, tired and hungry. He found his home cold and his table empty.

Already filled with anger at the white man, the great Spirit flew into a terrible fit of temper, and went in search of his wife. Finding her at last he raged at her for her neglect of him. When his wife angrily upbraided him for leaving her he raised his great hands and struck her down.

When his anger had subsided he was filled with grief and went out to try and find his wife, but, Manitou the greatest of all Indian Gods had turned her to stone and placed her upon Pie Island so that Nanna Bijou could not harm her again.

There she can be seen peeping out at every one that approaches hoping it is her beloved husband.

Some day if Nanna Bijou should come again and the Manitou forgives him legend says she will disappear, and if she does she will never leave his side again.

# THE PRINCESS OF THE MIST

FEW visitors leave the Canadian Lakehead without viewing the beautiful "Kakabeka Falls."

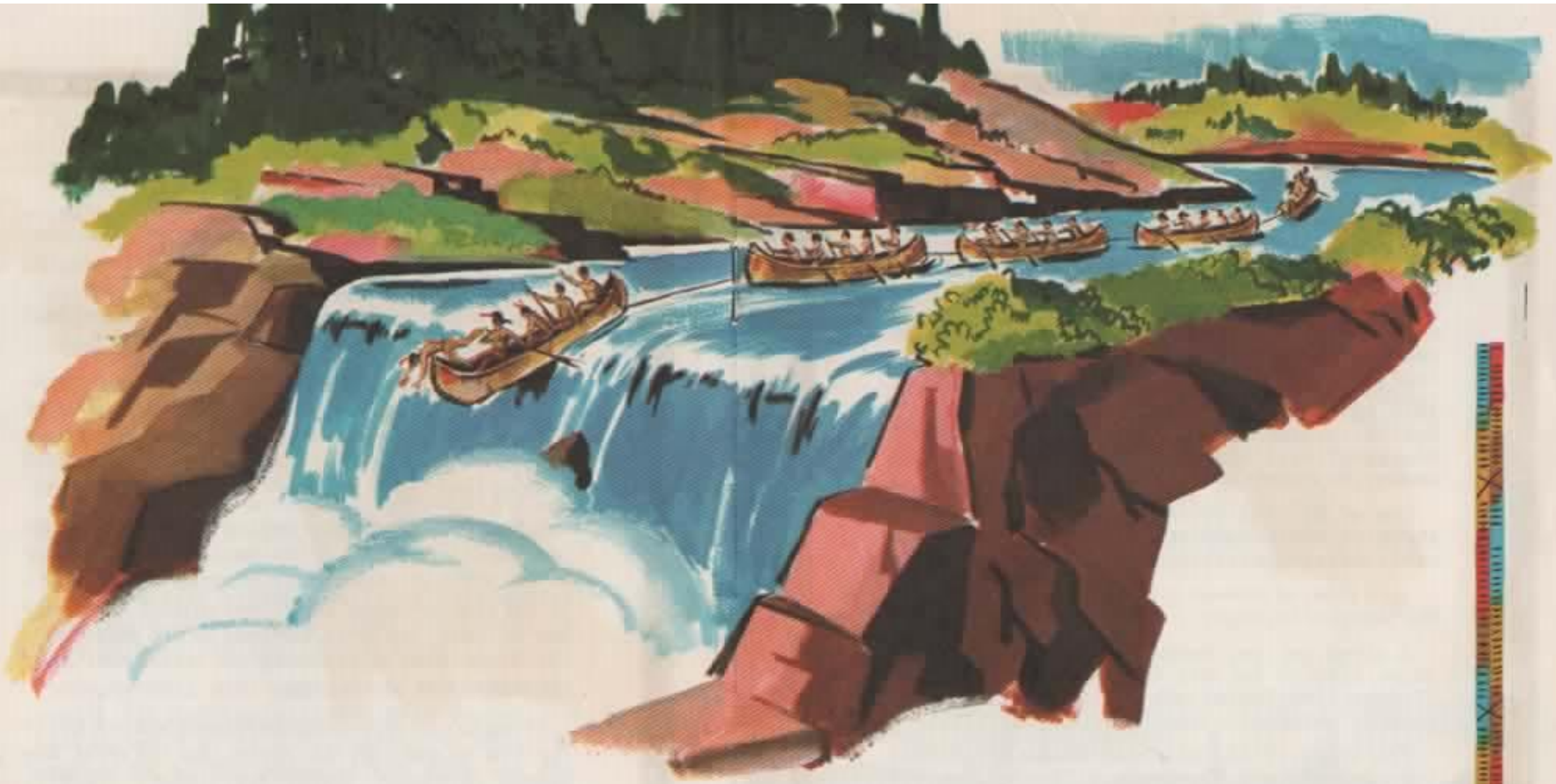
This remarkable work of nature is truly something to marvel at, but, the story of the heroism of a lovely Indian Princess is still more enchanting than the rushing, swirling water, and the crystal studded mist rising endlessly from the great gorge.

Interested only in the welfare of his people, the peace-loving chieftain White Bear, grand old leader of the Ojibway encampment situated at the mouth of the Kaministiquia River, was greatly vexed one day to learn that large numbers of the fierce warlike Sioux were approaching the river, bent upon the destruction of his tribe.

Being too old to go to battle himself and not knowing how to ward off the enemy, the old chief was greatly distressed. Seeing her father's dilemma, Princess Green Mantle devised a plan.

Bidding her father farewell she hurriedly left the camp and paddled swiftly up the Kaministiquia. Many times before she had gone for long canoe rides with her brother and she well knew of the Great White Falls. Leaving her canoe at the foot of the falls she ran swiftly along the bank until she reached a point well above the water-fall.

She soon came within sight of the Sioux Camp. Boldly the young maiden walked into the camp of her bitterest enemies. At once they pounced upon her and captured her. Pretending to have lost her way she led them to believe she was very frightened.



Green Mantle was taken before the Sioux Chieftains and they decided to put her to death. Bargaining with them she followed through with her plan and told them that if they would spare her life she would lead them to her father's camp. The Sioux Chiefs were elated thinking that they had indeed been blessed by the Gods.

The following morning the young Princess was placed in the lead canoe and the great band, in their war canoes, followed, tied, as Green Mantle suggested, one behind the other so that they would not get lost. However, she did not tell them about the falls, and as they swiftly turned the bend of the river they plunged headlong into the great gorge, killing all.

Princess Green Mantle, of course, lost her life also but all of her tribe were saved from the torturous hands of the most dreaded of all Indian tribesmen.

The Great Manitou looked kindly upon the brave little Indian girl, and if one takes the trouble to walk down the river bank to a point where the falls are visible, the figure of Green Mantle can be observed, in the mist, standing as a monument to the memory of the Princess that gave her life for her people.

# THE SEA LION OF SILVER ISLET

A TRIP to the Canadian Lakehead is not complete without a visit to the quaint little Silver Island resort, for here the spirit of the "Red-man" can be felt in every nook and cranny.

Centre of much of the lore and legend of the district, Silver Islet is not only beautifully picturesque, but leaves one with a sense of having "rubbed shoulders" with the chiefs and braves that once roamed its shores.

One of the most interesting sights of the islet is the great stone-Sea-Lion, a fitting subject for the artist and camera enthusiast.

As a point of interest it is most unusual, so also is the legend of its origin.

A great pet and constant companion of Nanna Bijou, spirit of the Deep Sea Water, was the giant Thunder Bird. Legend tells us that lightning darted from its eyes and its voice was the thunder.

The origin of this belief can be easily imagined when one listens to the storms of Thunder Bay, and realizes that the ancient Indians knew very little of the scientific explanations for the acts of nature.

Our story however deals more with a Lion. He too was a great companion of Nanna Bijou. Nagochee, for that was the Lion's name, was no ordinary animal, for he was credited with having the wings of an eagle and the feet of a duck. His speed was that of the wind and he could swim faster than the great fish.

One day the Spirit God was called upon to go on a long journey; mounting his great beast he hurriedly departed.

In his haste he forgot to take his Thunder Bird with him. Thinking he no longer cared for her and being very jealous she bitterly resented being left at home, and planned to destroy Nagochee.

Waiting for the return of Nanna Bijou she started to screech when she saw him appearing over the clouds.

Her voice shook the heavens and a terrific storm broke striking the Lion, and rider with its full force.

The great wind snapped off one of Nagochee's wings and he was twisted over and over throwing his Master into the Big Sea Water. The Lion tried in vain to swim to Nanna Bijou's aid but the waves were too much for him.

Nanna Bijou finally reached the shore by his own efforts and thinking his beast had failed him placed a curse upon him and turned him to stone.

There to this day stands the faithful old Nagochee, looking solemnly out to the water, waiting for his master to return.

# THE LITTLE CHAPEL ON MT. McKAY

WITHIN the past few years, members of the local band of Indians have built an excellent auto road winding up the steep slopes of Mt. McKay, and visitors may now drive in comfort up some four hundred feet, to what is called the "first ledge."

Here can be seen a great stone cross erected to the memory of the Indians that gave their lives for Canada in the First Great War. In close proximity stands a picturesque little stone chapel.

Having been erected in less ancient times, the legend surrounding its origin, perhaps contains more actual facts than those of older origin.

Our story begins about a century and a half ago, when the Ojibway had a flourishing encampment close to the site of present day Fort William.

The tribe had learned something of agriculture, and small but bounteous wheat fields filled the clearings dotted here and there among the great spruce and birch trees.

The time of our story would be toward Thanksgiving, when the grain had reached the crisp golden hue of ripening.

The tribe was jubilant at the prospects of a bountiful harvest, but, their joy was to be short lived for a great plague beset them. Swarms of hungry blackbirds swooped down from the skies, and in spite of the swift arrows of the men, the grain was soon all devoured.

Their cereal all gone, the tribe realized that they must make greater effort in their hunting in order to secure sufficient food to last the long winter. But the Gods had seemingly forsaken the Ojibway, for that winter the snow came in great storms, and the animals disappeared from the woods. Even those of the men that ventured out into the forest in hope of finding some little food, became lost and perished in the deep snow drifts.

What little food the tribe did possess soon vanished and starvation faced the people. Men became crazed and killed each other, children cried pitifully for food until it seemed that the tribe would all perish.

Where could they obtain food? What was to be done? There was only one thing left . . . fish! But how could they get it? Hooks, even through the ice,must have bait and all the food was gone!

There is always one brave person in a group of people, and in this legend that person, was a young Princess, daughter of the Chief of the tribe.

She could not bear to hear the crying of the children and, heroically, she took her father's hunting knife and cut strips of flesh from her legs. This she gave to the men and bade them use it for bait.

Hurriedly the men departed for the lake and in a short while returned with a good catch. Most of the fish were divided among the people and some kept for bait. In a few days sufficient fish had been caught to feed the tribe and all were saved! But what of the brave young girl?

Her heroic action had been too much of a shock and she slowly wasted away.

By spring the maiden lay between life and death, and a visiting priest arrived only just in time to bless the girl before she died.

Hearing the story of her brave deed, the priest ordered the men of the tribe to build a chapel to the memory of the princess and to here offer their thanks to God and pray for his blessing upon their future crops.

Each year at Thanksgiving the Indians go to the little chapel, and it is more than just coincidence that ever since their first thanks offering, the crops of Thunder Bay have neither failed nor have they been destroyed by plague.

# THE ORIGIN OF "INDIAN SUMMER"

A trip to almost any part of Canada, and especially the vast woodland wilderness of "The Land of the Sleeping Giant" in Northwestern Ontario between September 15 - October 15, is one of breathtaking delight. The ever-changing panorama of Reds, Golds and Greens mingled with the sparkling waters of a myriad of lakes is never-to-be forgotten.

This was not always such a happy season of the year, for many an early settler came to his death during this period.

Because of the warm days and cool nights at this time, low lying mists surround the river and lake banks, where the pioneers were compelled to build their homes, in the evening and early morning. Taking advantage of these mists the Indians would attack, and this part of autumn became known as the dreaded "Indian Summer".

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